2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

had been further diminished by several deaths. One of this day's victims to the epidemic being Algo, Tankelow's youngest daughter, the father was in great distress and anger, as he attributed the death not to the distemper, but to witchcraft. [761]

The warm and tolerably fine weather experienced since our departure from Telek had been succeeded by a heavy, murky, still atmosphere, and the clouded sky promised a downfall of rain, which speedily came. The next day more children and the old deaf and dumb woman died; over her little moan was made, but the lamentations over the children were terrible to hear, and on all sides mares were slaughtered. The abundance of meat, and the general confusion, combined with the rain to defeat Casimiro's anxious desire to proceed. The accumulation of miseries had rendered all the Indians gloomy and ill-humoured; and since our departure from Geylum we had had ample experience of the wretched side of Pampa life.

This district is always dreaded by the Indians, who assert that they invariably are attacked by a similar sickness when in it, notwithstanding that some considered it to have been occasioned by poison or deleterious drugs administered by our late neighbours. The marches had therefore been forced and prolonged, and the increased fatigue had doubtless aided the distemper in its fatal effects. Nearly half the children and several of the elder people died during our progress to Margensho, and the utter misery and discomfort cannot be described. The rain had continually drenched us; the women, distracted with their endeavours to soothe the sick children, and their grief over the dead, could not attend to their domestic duties; our mantles were unmended, and proved but a poor shelter from the rain, no small misery in this climate, and the arrangements of the toldos were utterly devoid of their customary care and comfort. The usual good temper and cheerfulness of all had fled, and grief, sickness, and angry suspicion cast a gloom over every countenance.

The marriage ceremony, once the woman's price has been fixed 585
and paid, is limited to the father's taking her to the groom's tent, unless she herself goes off to the groom unattended, a thing which is not at all reprehensible. The groom then has a mare or two slaughtered, according to his means, and invites the bride's and his own male and female relatives and friends to eat the meat which, once done, the marriage ceremony is over.

Both the men and the women are very loving and devoted to their 854
children, whom, as soon as they are born, they bind about with many soft and pliable leather bands which they have in readiness. The babies are bound for over a month to a board made of many small sticks which are tied together and covered with hide. The Indians say that they grow up [142
straight in this way, and the fact is that both the men and the women are 516]
all very straight and well built, and none are ever seen whose shoulders are hunched. Once the babies are taken out of their bindings the mothers usually carry them about with them on their backs, the baby's head issuing from the same opening in the garment as the mother's. When on the march they make a sort of cradle out of hide and sticks, rounded over and sealed on all sides except for openings for the head and feet, which they line and embellish with flannel, cloth or anything they may have, and ornament with beads, bells, etc., as they may be able to, and they secure them on the horse's rump behind the mother. Children are never seen to weep amongst these people, unless they receive a blow or fall.

Their religion is limited to a sort of belief in two powers, one 776
benign, which has jurisdiction only over the heavens and is independent 778
from and without power on the earth and its inhabitants, of whom they [771]
take little notice; the other power is both benign and stern, and governs the earth, directing, chastening and rewarding its inhabitants. This power they worship in any guise in which they may represent it, or in the shape of some object found on the beach washed up from a shipwreck, such as masks from a ship's prow or fashion pieces from the stern, these being the preferred representations for their worship since they suppose them to have appeared by enchantment. This deity is called the Camalasque, which can be rendered as "powerful and valiant" [75]. Each person who has one of the figures defends it and believes that his is the true deity and those belonging to other Indians are false ones; yet disputes never flare up or get out of hand because they feel that the deity will itself bring down vengeance upon those who offend it. They believe that sickness and death are the [753
god's retribution, unless they occur in old age, in which case they are 76[]
attributed to natural causes. These images are kept in the tents, completely wrapped up in skins, woolen cloth, flannel or linen, as each is [754]